

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Sumner Rosenberg on June 2, 2011.

The application has been amended as follows:

1. (Currently amended) ~~Device~~ A sample probe for taking liquid samples from a first container that ~~are~~ is filled with a liquid medium, wherein a non-return valve element is arranged within ~~a~~ the sample probe as an inlet to a second container, the inlet for a liquid sample that is to be taken, which element is opened solely by means of negative pressure, wherein a supply line which is able to convey gas to the second container and one discharge line which is able to discharge sample and ~~which is able to generate~~ to convey the negative pressure for opening the valve element ~~and~~ for suction of the sample, ~~are~~ arranged on the side of the element that is remote from the medium arranged in ~~a~~ the first container, wherein the supply line which is able to convey gas to close the valve element and the discharge line which is able to discharge sample are in each case connected directly to a the second container which receives the sample via the inlet so that the sample inside the second container is completely isolated from the rest of the medium during the ~~discharge~~ conveying of the gas and the sample by closing the valve element.

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10. (Currently amended) Device according to Claim 9, further comprising a first and second valve arranged in the region of ~~a~~ the first and second end of the gas-conveying connecting line.

18. (Currently amended) Method for taking liquid samples from a first container ~~containers~~ that ~~are~~ is filled with a liquid medium, wherein a non-return valve element is arranged within a sample probe as an inlet to a second container, the inlet for a liquid sample that is to be taken, which element is opened solely by means of negative pressure, characterized by the following steps:

- supplying a gas to the non-return valve element on the side of the element that is remote from the medium arranged in the first container, by means of a supply line that can be shut off from other lines,
- discharging the gas from the non-return valve element by means of one discharge line and opening a valve ~~a device~~ which is arranged in said one discharge line and which acts as a shut-off valve, until the supply line and said one discharge line are free of a sample,
- closing at least one valve in order to disconnect the supply line from a gas supply connection,
- generating in said ~~single~~ one discharge line a negative pressure with respect to the pressure that exists in the first container,
- automatically opening the valve element by means of the negative pressure that has been generated and conveying a liquid sample that is to be taken from the first container into said second container and said discharge line,

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- supplying a gas which is again supplied at positive pressure with respect to the pressure that exists in the first container,
 - automatically closing the valve element by means of the positive pressure that has been generated, and
 - conveying the liquid sample out of the discharge line by means of the gas which has again been supplied at positive pressure,
- wherein the supply line which is able to convey gas and the discharge line which is able to discharge sample are in each case connected directly to a the second container which receives the sample so that the sample inside the second container is completely isolated from the rest of the medium during the conveying of the gas and discharging of the sample ~~discharge of the gas~~.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to NASHMIYA FAYYAZ whose telephone number is (571)272-2192. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hezron Williams can be reached on 571-272-2208. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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